

Sacramento 3.4.03  
Santa Monica Bay Wet Weather Bacteria TMDL  
Comments to State Board  
Susan Cloke

Good afternoon. I'm Susan Cloke, Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Board and I'm here to represent the LA Board Members and our perspective on the water quality and public policy reasons to support the Wet Weather TMDL.

Our beaches are an icon for Southern California. This TMDL translates that icon into practical public health and recreational benefits for the over 55 million visitors to SMB beaches each year. (LA County Lifeguards Report) And it specifically protects the 7.5 million visitors who come to the Santa Monica Bay beaches from November through March..

First, the Wet Weather TMDL reduces the health risks associated with pathogen and bacteria laden waters. There is strong data to support the causal relationship between health ailments, recreational water quality and bacteria and pathogen laden water.

Second, our beaches are a major source of revenue and a major contributor to the economy of the Los Angeles region. Travel and tourism is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest economic engine in the LA Region. ( LA County Convention and Visitor's Bureau) Coastal and Beach tourism has, in the past, brought more than 1.7 billion dollars /year into the Coastal areas alone. (Southern California Beach Valuation Study) Simply put, beach closures are bad for business. Additionally, the cost of illnesses, to both the individual and to the economy, due to contact with pathogen and bacteria laden waters is significant.

Third, and finally, I want to discuss the critical importance of the Integrated Water Resources approach to implementation. The benefits of using an integrated approach are:

- ❖ Achievement of multiple public policy goals in one action.
- ❖ The Wet Weather Pathogen TMDL, and many, if not most, other TMDL's could be met by one low impact design that uses natural processes to clean storm water.

- ❖ Both water quality and water quantity could be enhanced through the use of an integrated approach. The Amount of water we send to the ocean as runoff is equal to 50% of the amount of water we import. We have the opportunity to decrease our dependence on imported water through infiltrating storm water and through thoughtful site design.
- ❖ Using low impact strategies will create an opportunity for us to address our water quality problems and, at the same time, create vastly increased open green and recreational space in an urban environment and recharge groundwater.
- ❖ If we implement the Integrated Water Resources strategy, we could, by diverting storm water and building parks along the path of stormwater travel, create many beautiful parks and open green and recreational areas from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Santa Monica Bay.

In conclusion, Water quality, water quantity, public health, economic, recreational, and social benefits can all be realized through design that better integrates the natural landscape with storm water quality and drainage needs. For all these reasons, we ask for your support of the Wet Weather TMDL. Thank you.